

THE CHOSEN CITY: Jerusalem or Shechem? Part 1

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 27 July 2013 13:01 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 October 2016 10:39

[My new book - YAHWEH CONSPIRACY - is now available from amazon.com](#)

The adherents of Normative Judaism, Islam and Christianity - regard Jerusalem as a chosen city which God Himself chose and where alone the sacrificial cult was to be practiced. The Samaritans on the other hand maintain that Shechem was chosen and that on Mount Gerizim alone the sacrificial cult was to be practiced. It can be plainly demonstrated from the Bible itself that God in fact never chose the Jews nor did He ever choose Jerusalem or its Temple to be the only legitimate and authentic place of worship of which Moses spoke. It was David himself who separated from the original tribes of Israel and who waged long and bloody war in order to exterminate the dynasty of King Saul. During this long and bloody war the eleven tribes of Israel bitterly resisted David and they refused to recognise his authority and the hegemony of the Jews. After David conquered the eleven tribes of Israel and after he defeated the Jebusites and took Jerusalem, the Jerusalem became his own city - Davidsburg - and he established Jerusalem as the place of worship in opposition to the Tabernacle which Moses constructed in the desert. David also appointed his own High Priest and set Judah - that is, the Jews - as the ruling class over the Israelites. The eleven tribes of Israel refused to accept David's dynasty and they rejected Jerusalem and the hegemony of the Jews - looking for the first opportunity to liberate themselves and restore their independence.

Distinction Between The Jews And Israelites □

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were Hebrews and therefore their descendants are identified as Hebrews in the Bible. Genesis 14:13 uses the phrase "Abraham the Hebrew." Potiphar's wife identified Joseph as a "Hebrew slave" [Genesis 39:15-16]. Joseph said that he was "kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews" [Genesis 40:15]. The Hebrews were also "Semites" because they were descended from Shem, Noah's son. Thus the terms "Hebrew" and "Semite" were used of

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Abraham and his descendants until God changed Jacob's name to ISRAEL. From then on this name became the NATIONAL and IDENTIFYING name of the HEBREWS who were of the Semitic stock. Jewish Encyclopedia, art. Israel, People Of - candidly admits that ISRAEL was the national name of the people who were racially known as "Hebrews":

"In the Bible "Israel" is the national name of the people who are known racially as "Hebrews."

For centuries these peoples were never identified as Jews nor was any Israelite ever known or identified by the term "Jew." Since Jacob was renamed ISRAEL all his posterity in Egypt was identified as ISRAEL. After the death of Joseph, Jacob's descendants are identified as Israelites and occasionally as Hebrews. Moses and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh of the "God of Israel" and "God of the Hebrews." Neither they nor anyone else for centuries ever spoke of the Jews or the God of the Jews. Although all Israelites constituted the nation of Israel not all of them were of the same clan. The Israelites were originally divided into TWELVE and later into THIRTEEN clans or tribes - in accordance with the sons of Israel [Jacob]. The descendants of REUBEN were known as Reubenites, those of Simeon as Simeonites, those of Levi as Levites and those of Judah as Judahites etc. The descendants of the eleven sons of Israel [Jacob] were never identified as Jews in the Bible. Only the descendants of JUDAH were called "Jews" - that is, Yahudim, a plural form of Yahudah [Judah]. The term "Jew" is English corruption of "Judah" and the word first time appears in 2 Kings 16:6. In fact, in this chapter where the term "Jew" appears for the first time in the King James Bible we actually find the Jews being at war with ISRAEL. By this time these Jews were no part of ISRAEL since they seceded from the nation of Israel and established their own state. After the tribe of Judah seceded from Israel and after King David became the king of the Jews, the biblical writers clearly spoke of Judah [the Jews] and the Israelites as two distinct peoples and two distinct kingdoms and nations. This is true even of the Jewish redactors. They clearly distinguished between JUDAH [the Jews] and ISRAEL [the eleven sons of Israel-Jacob - as will be demonstrated later.

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Moses And The Chosen Place

Moses spoke of the tribe or clan of Israel which God was going to choose and select and the city in this tribe where alone it would be lawful to build an altar and practice the sacrificial cult. In this place alone God was to place His Name and to this place alone all other tribes were commanded to go and worship and make their festival pilgrimages. In Deuteronomy 12:2-18 Moses explicitly states:

"...But you are to seek the place Yahweh your God will CHOOSE from among all your tribes to put His Name there for a DWELLING. To THAT PLACE YOU MUST GO; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

There in the presence of Yahweh your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because Yahweh your God has blessed you...But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land Yahweh your God is giving you as an inheritance, and He will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety

. Then to the place Yahweh your God will choose as a dwelling for His Name - there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to Yahweh.

And there rejoice before Yahweh your God, you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns, who have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO SACRIFICE YOUR BURNT OFFERINGS ANYWHERE YOU PLEASE. OFFER THEM ONLY AT THE PLACE YAHWEH WILL CHOOSE IN ONE OF YOUR TRIBES, and there observe everything I command you

...You must not eat in your own towns the tithe of your grain and new wine and oil, or the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or whatever you have vowed to give, or your freewill offerings or special gifts. Instead, you are to eat them in the presence of Yahweh your God AT THE PLACE YAHWEH YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE."

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In Deuteronomy 16:5-6 the following words are credited to Moses:

“You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town Yahweh your God gives you except in the place HE WILL CHOOSE as a dwelling for His Name . There you must sacrifice the Passover.”

In Deuteronomy 14:22-26 the following words are attributed to Moses:

“Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of Yahweh your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His Name, so that you may learn to revere Yahweh your God always. But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by Yahweh your God and cannot carry your tithe [because the place where Yahweh will choose to put His Name is so far away], then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place Yahweh your God will choose. Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or fermented drink, or anything you lust for. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of Yahweh your God and rejoice.”

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In Deuteronomy 16:16 Moses says:

“Three times a year all your men must appear before Yahweh your God *at the place He will choose:* at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.”

These words ascribed to Moses unmistakably speak of one CENTRAL SHRINE erected in ONE TRIBE which God Himself was TO CHOOSE. All the tribes were commanded to worship at this place alone. Those who lived far from the chosen place were not exempted from the pilgrimage. They too had to go to the chosen place and take the silver and money with them and buy everything they needed in the chosen place. Which tribe did God actually choose after the Israelites settled in the land of Canaan? And which city did He consecrate and at what place in that city did He choose to place His Name? The Jewish redactors claim that it was the tribe of Judah, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple Solomon built. Please note the text of 1 Kings 14:21:

“He [Rehoboam] reigned seventeen years in JERUSALEM, the CITY WHICH YAHWEH HAD CHOSEN *OUT OF ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL TO PUT HIS NAME THERE.*”

This text plainly states that of all the tribes of Israel, God chose JERUSALEM which was in the tribe of JUDAH and that in this city alone God chose to place His Name. Now please note 1

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Kings 11:32,36:

“but he [Solomon] shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of *Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen OUT OF ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL...*

and to his [Solomon's son] I will give one tribe, that my servant David may always have a lamp before me

IN JERUSALEM, THE CITY WHICH I HAVE CHOSEN FOR MYSELF, TO PUT MY NAME THERE

”

This text does not only say that Jerusalem was actually chosen out of all the tribes of Israel and that David was chosen to be its king, but the text also says that no matter what may come - Jerusalem will always remain intact so that David's dynasty may always rule there. Even though Solomon abandoned God and worshipped the hinder gods and goddesses, God overlooked his wickedness because of the alleged oath to David and because He allegedly chose Jerusalem perpetually and unconditionally. The Jewish redactors originally claimed that God would never abandon Jerusalem and its Temple and that there was always going to be a descendant of David ruling on the throne of Judah in Jerusalem. Abijam was the son of Rehoboam and the great, grand son of King David. He lived a very wicked life. But the redactor said that God would not destroy him nor reject Jerusalem because of David. Please note 1 Kings 15:3-4:

“He committed all the sins his father [Rehoboam] had done before him...Nevertheless, for David's sake Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong.”

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The Jewish redactor did not only believe that Jerusalem was chosen and was actually the CHOSEN HOLY PLACE of which Moses spoke, but he also maintained that through all times God was going to protect the Davidic dynasty and the city of Jerusalem and that no sin of the people of Judah could bring about downfall of Jerusalem - since God allegedly swore an unconditional oath to David. In 2 Kings 8:18-19 the Jewish redactor says that God would not destroy Judah and therefore Jerusalem since He promised so to David:

“He [Jehoram] walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of Yahweh. Nevertheless, for the sake of His servant David, Yahweh was not willing to destroy Judah. HE HAD PROMISED TO MAINTAIN A LAMP FOR DAVID AND HIS DESCENDANTS FOREVER.”

2 Chronicles 21:4-7 shows just how evil Jehoram was:

“Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and *killed all his brothers with the sword*...And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done...Yet Yahweh *would not destroy the house of David, BECAUSE OF THE COVENANT THAT HE HAD MADE WITH DAVID AND SINCE HE HAD PROMISED TO GIVE A LAMP TO HIM AND HIS SONS FOREVER* .”

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Jehoram murdered all his brothers - the sons of Jehoshaphat - in order to secure his position on the throne. Even though Jehoram was such an evil man and even though he lived several generations after King David - the Jewish redactor claimed that God overlooked all his murders and evils and would not reject Jerusalem because He allegedly unconditionally promised to preserve the descendants of David on the throne of David. In other words, the Jewish redactors believed that Jerusalem and the throne of David were invincible.

The Jewish redactors also claimed that the Temple Solomon built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem was the holy and chosen place where alone it was permissible to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. God allegedly promised to always keep watch over that Temple and to have Levites perpetually offer sacrifices before Him. Please note 2 Chronicles 7:11-12,16:

“Thus Solomon finished the House of Yahweh and the king’s house...Then Yahweh appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: I have heard your prayer, *and have chosen this place* [the Temple]

for myself as a HOUSE OF SACRIFICE...For now I HAVE CHOSEN AND SANCTIFIED THIS HOUSE, THAT MY NAME MAY BE THERE FOREVER;

and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually

.”

The text clearly states that the Temple Solomon built was chosen by God and that it alone was the place where God chose to place His Name. The redactor clearly links this place with the place Moses spoke of in Deuteronomy. And now please note Jeremiah 33:17-21:

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“For thus says Yahweh...the priests, the Levites, *shall not lack a man* to offer burnt offerings before me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually

...Thus says Yahweh: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, then my covenant may also be broken...with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.”

Clearly the Jewish redactors believed that the Aaronic priests were invincible and that God made a perpetual covenant with them so that they could perpetually and continually serve in the Temple and present burnt offerings and sacrifices. That covenant could be broken only if the covenant with the day and night could be altered. This is rather a powerful claim. But we shall see later that the text is a forgery since it does not appear in the Greek Septuagint Bible. The very fact that the Temple was destroyed and that the Levites no longer serve nor present sacrifices and burnt offerings shows that either God broke His covenant or else He never made such a promise. We shall look into Hezekiah's and Josiah's reforms later. It is thus plain that the Jewish redactors presented Jerusalem and its Temple as the place which God chose to place His Name - in accordance with the texts of Deuteronomy. But there is a major problem here. When Moses spoke of the chosen place and the chosen tribe he never mentioned Jerusalem or the tribe of Judah even indirectly. Moses actually named the chosen place and where an altar should be built. But this place most certainly was not Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Mount Moriah was the place which David personally chose and not God. Moses unmistakably spoke of the tribe of Ephraim and the city of Shechem. Moses clearly named the two mountains in the vicinity of Shechem when he spoke of the one and only chosen place where all the tribes must assemble to worship: The uninterrupted speech of Moses concerning the HOLY PLACE begins at Deuteronomy 11:29 and ends at 12:28. In 11:29-31 Moses explicitly said the following:

“And it shall be, when Yahweh your God *has brought you into the land* which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on MOUNT GERIZIM and the curse on MOUNT EBAL. Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, towards the setting sun, in the land of the

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Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which Yahweh your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it.”

□

Moses specified that Mt. Gerizim was the place where the BLESSINGS OF THE LAW should be recited in the hearing of all the people while the curses should be recited on Mt. Ebal. These mountains were in the vicinity of Shechem. You can read the speech of Moses word-for-word but you will not find even the slightest hint of Moses concerning the tribe of Judah or its capital Hebron or its later capital Jerusalem. The chosen place was to be established immediately after the tribes crossed the Jordan River and took the possession of the land and not centuries later - as was the case with Jerusalem in the days of David. Moses clearly said that they should erect an altar in the chosen place after they take the possession of the land and he clearly specified where they should do so. Please note Deuteronomy 27:1-8:

“Then Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: Keep all the commandments which I command you today. And it shall be, *on the day when you cross over the Jordan* to the land which Yahweh your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves LARGE STONES, and whitewash them with lime. You shall *write on them all the words of this law*, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which Yahweh your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as Yahweh God of your fathers has promised you. Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan , *that on MOUNT EBAL YOU SHALL SET UP THESE STONES*, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. And *there you shall build an ALTAR* to Yahweh your God, an *ALTAR OF STONES*; you shall not use any iron tool on them. You shall build with *WHOLE STONES THE ALTAR* to Yahweh your God, and offer *BURNT OFFERINGS on it to Yahweh your God*

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. You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before Yahweh your God. And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.”

□

Since Moses maintained that only one tribe would be chosen and that only in that tribe there will be a CHOSEN PLACE where God will establish His Name and that only on that altar will it be lawful to present burnt offerings and sacrifices, and since in Deuteronomy 27 Moses named this place as MOUNT EBAL [according to Samaritan Pentateuch Gerizim] at SHECHEM, how clear then that the TRIBE OF EPHRAIM WAS CHOSEN AND THE HOLY CITY OF SHECHEM. In no place at all did Moses ever single out the tribe of Judah where there will be a chosen place. Neither did he ever name Hebron or Jerusalem as the place where blessings and curses and the stone tablets containing the whole law should be displayed or the altar should be erected. On the contrary, Moses clearly stated that the chosen place was at SHECHEM in the tribe of EPHRAIM - the son of JOSEPH whom Israel appointed heir and to whom he gave the DOUBLE PORTION of his possessions. At the time the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and settled in Palestine, Jerusalem was still under Jebusite control. It remained the stronghold of the Jebusites until David finally conquered it. Besides, Moses never spoke of Jerusalem or the tribe of Judah. He spoke of Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal which were at Shechem and not Jerusalem. They were in Ephraim on the border with Manasseh and not Judah. Besides, it is clear that the chosen place was established by the command of Moses during the lifetime of Joshua and not several centuries later - when insolent King David ruled. Joshua 8:30-35 proves this beyond dispute:

“Now Joshua BUILT AN ALTAR to Yahweh, God of Israel in MOUNT EBAL, as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded any iron tool. And they *offer ed on it burnt offerings to Yahweh, and sacrificed peace offerings*

. And there in the presence of the children of Israel,
he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written

. Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of MOUNT GERIZIM and half of them in front of MOUNT EBAL, as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterwards he read all the words of the

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law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.”

□

This irrefutably proves that the chosen place and the chosen tribe of which Moses spoke in Deuteronomy could not have been Jerusalem nor Judah but actually Ephraim and the city of Shechem. It is noteworthy to point out that the Samaritan Pentateuch actually has Moses say that the altar must be erected on Mount Gerizim - the mountain where blessings were to be pronounced and not Mount Ebal as the Jewish Pentateuch says. Most biblical scholars accept the Samaritan reading and not that of the Jewish Masoretic Text. We shall see later that even the martyr Stephen prefers the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch and whenever the New Testament disagrees with the Jewish Masoretic Text it actually agrees with the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Joseph The Chosen One □

We shall now see just why Moses spoke of Shechem and the tribe of Ephraim when he commanded the Israelites to worship and offer sacrifices in just one tribe and at only one central shrine. Moses knew all along that Israel [Jacob] in fact singled out Joseph as his heir and the replacement of Reuben. According to Deuteronomy 21:16-17 the firstborn son had the birthright which means that he was to be the most important of the sons and that he was to inherit the double portion from his father:

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“When the man decides how he is going to divide his property among his children, he is not to show partiality to the son of his favourite wife by GIVING THE SHARE THAT BELONGS TO THE FIRSTBORN SON. He is to give a *DOUBLE SHARE* of his possessions to his first son...A man must acknowledge his first son and give him the share he is legally entitled to.”

□

Reuben as the firstborn was entitled to the *DOUBLE PORTION* of his father’s property. He was also to be the most important and dominant figure in the family. But because he defiled his father’s bed - as one of the Genesis sources says - he lost his legal right. Genesis 49:3-4 puts these words in the mouth of Jacob:

“ Reuben, my firstborn, you are my strength and the first child of my manhood, the proudest and the strongest of all my sons. You are like a raging flood. *But you will NOT be THE MOST IMPORTANT* , for you slept with my concubine and dishonored your father’s bed.”

□

Please note. As an heir Reuben was to be *THE MOST IMPORTANT* among his brothers. But due to the circumstances, Jacob named his replacement. In the same chapter, verse 26 Jacob singled out JOSEPH as his replacement. Please note these words of Jacob:

□

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“May these blessings rest on the head of JOSEPH, on the brow of the one SET APART from his brothers.”□

Jacob clearly stated that JOSEPH was *SET APART* from his brothers. Joseph was now to become an HEIR of Jacob and be known by his father’s new name - ISRAEL. If this text seems ambiguous then surely the text of 1 Chronicles 5:1-2 is crystal clear:

“... forasmuch as he [Reuben] defiled his father’s bed, his birthright WAS GIVEN UNTO THE SONS OF JOSEPH the son of Israel.”

Israel [Jacob] singled out Joseph and set him above all his brothers. Only Joseph received a DOUBLE PORTION of his father’s property and only Joseph was later represented by TWO TRIBES - his two sons EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH. No other son of Israel - and this most certainly includes Judah - received a DOUBLE PORTION of Israel’s possessions nor was Judah ever represented by TWO OF HIS SONS. This was only Joseph’s privilege since he was named by Israel as his heir and representative. Likewise, only the sons of Joseph were allocated property just like any other son of Israel. No son of Judah or any other son of Israel received any property of Israel either then or later in the land of Canaan. But Joseph under his two sons and representatives received their allotment in the land of Canaan. Joshua made sure this was the case [Joshua 16&17]. Ezekiel 47:13 also shows that Joseph must have a DOUBLE PORTION - showing that he was set above all his other brothers:

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“Thus says the Lord Yahweh: These are the borders by which you shall divide the land for the inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel: JOSEPH SHALL HAVE TWO PORTIONS.”

Ephraim and Manasseh - and all those who joined their union - were collectively known as ISRAEL or THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. They were to bear the new name of Jacob - Israel [Genesis 48:16]. The Jews who seceded from ISRAEL were always identified as JUDAH and the HOUSE OF JUDAH and later as JUDAEA. In 1948 the Jews kidnapped the name ISRAEL from their old and bitter rivals and they also stole their land. The ancient Samaria and Galilee do not belong to the Jews and it was never allocated to the tribe of Judah. These territories were allocated to the ELEVEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL and never to the Jews. The Jews today deprive the Samaritans of their ancient land and also mistreat the Palestinians who are in fact their blood brothers - since they too are Semites and, like Syrians, are descended from Aram. As long as the Jews hold onto the stolen land there cannot be true and real peace in the Middle East. When Israel [Jacob] was blessing the sons of Joseph he pointed out that the younger - Ephraim - was to be the chief among his brothers. In Jeremiah 31:9 God points out that Ephraim is his FIRSTBORN:

“For I am a Father to Israel, and EPHRAIM is my FIRSTBORN.”

Since Ephraim is God's FIRSTBORN then most certainly JUDAH cannot be. Since Ephraim, as the FIRSTBORN with the DOUBLE PORTION of BIRTHRIGHT INHERITANCE is the CHIEF, it logically follows that JUDAH must be SUBORDINATE. Since Moses named the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal in the vicinity of SHECHEM as the holy and chosen place, it follows then that Jerusalem cannot be the chosen city nor its Temple the holy place where the altar which Moses constructed in the desert should stand. Israel gave Shechem to his son Joseph as inheritance. Some Bible translators try to hide this fact but the Hebrew and especially the Greek Septuagint clearly shows that the rendering of the Good News Bible is correct when it says:

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“As you see, I [Israel] am about to die, but God will take you back to the land of your ancestors. It is TO YOU [Joseph] AND NOT to your brothers that I am GIVING SHECHEM, that fertile region.”

Shechem was legally Joseph's. This city originally played a significant role in the lives of the early patriarchs. Shechem was Abraham's first stop when he entered the land of Canaan. In this city he built his first altar [Genesis 12:6-7]. Israel [Jacob] also erected an altar at Shechem [Genesis 33:18-20]. I have already shown that Joshua established Shechem as the holy and chosen place in accordance with what Moses commanded [Joshua 8:30-35]. He did so right after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and took the possession of the land of Canaan. Years later - just before his death - Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel in Shechem in order to renew the covenant and to give them his final instructions. This in itself proves that at that time SHECHEM was still the CENTRAL PLACE where all the tribes gathered before God. Please note Joshua 24:1,25-26:

“Then Joshua gathered ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL to SHECHEM and called for the leaders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves BEFORE GOD. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in SHECHEM. Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up under the oak THAT WAS BY THE SANCTUARY OF YEAHWEH.”

This text clearly shows that at that time - some 50 years after Joshua originally sanctified Shechem - there was still the SANTUARY or the TEMPLE in SHECHEM where they all

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gathered in order to renew the covenant. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible*, on pp. 702-703 says:

“Joshua called Israel back to SHECHEM, under the shadow of GERIZIM and EBAL, to renew the covenant, which he did in this manner: he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE LORD. This site was sacred to the Israelites IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THEIR OCCUPATION OF THE PROMISED LAND. In the movement towards the centralization of worship AT JERUSALEM UNDER DAVID AND SOLOMON, OTHER WORSHIP CENTRES WERE NOT LOOKED UPON WITH FAVOUR.”

What this biblical encyclopedia actually admits is this: in the early history of Israel, Shechem was the SACRED PLACE in accordance with the command of Moses. It was a place WHERE THE SANCTUARY OF YAHWEH AND ITS ALTAR WAS SITUATED. Shechem was rejected only after David established Jerusalem by his own authority and Solomon later built the Temple in the place of David's own choosing. From then on Jerusalem was regarded as the HOLY CITY and its TEMPLE as the CHOSEN PLACE where all the tribes were required to worship and present sacrifices. Hezekiah and especially Josiah ENFORCED worship in Jerusalem and DEMOLISHED ALL OTHER ALTARS IN ISRAEL - even very those where Samuel and Elijah used to sacrifice.

Stephen And The Samaritan View

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The Jews maintain that Abraham established the FAMILY TOMB in HEBRON their ancient and original capital, where even David initially ruled. They claim that Abraham, Isaac, and Israel [Jacob] were buried in this family tomb in Hebron. The Samaritans on the other hand reject this claim and they insist that the FAMILY TOMB was actually in SHECHEM and that all three patriarchs and also the sons of Israel were actually buried in SHECHEM. The Jews claim that the family tomb was in Hebron because they believe that Judah was chosen and therefore the chosen place and the most important family tomb of the patriarchs must be located in Hebron. The Samaritans on the other hand argue that Joseph was chosen and that the family tomb of the patriarchs therefore must be in Shechem. Who is right? The Jewish Masoretic Text clearly supports the Jewish view. The King James Bible also clearly shows that Abraham, Isaac, and Israel were actually buried in Machpelah Cave, near Hebron. Genesis 21 shows that Abraham bought this cave and its field in order to bury his wife Sarah. Genesis 47:27-31 also shows that Israel made his son Joseph promise that he would bury him with his fathers in Hebron. Genesis 49:29-32 says that Israel later charged all his sons to bury him with his fathers in the Machpelah Cave near Hebron:

“Then he [Israel] charged them [his twelve sons] and said to them: I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.”

The text clearly shows that this was a FAMILY TOMB and that it was adjacent to Mamre, near Hebron. Genesis 50:12-14 explicitly states that Joseph and his brothers kept their promise and buried their father in Hebron:

“So his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of

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Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.”

The Jewish Masoretic Text and therefore the official Jewish Pentateuch on which almost all Christian Old Testaments are based maintains that Israel [Jacob] was buried in the family tomb and that this family tomb was actually in HEBRON and not SHECHEM. The Masoretic Text only admits that Joseph himself was buried in SEHCHEM. Joshua 24:32 explicitly says that Joseph’s bones were buried by Joshua in SHECHEM:

“The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, THEY BURIED AT SHECHEM, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver and WHICH HAD BECOME AN INHERITANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH.”

This immediately creates a problem. In those days it was imperative to be buried in the family tomb - the tomb of the fathers. For this reason Isaac was buried with Abraham and Israel insisted that Joseph and his brothers bury him in the family tomb. Why then should Joseph be buried elsewhere and not the family tomb where all his fathers and relatives were buried? The Samaritans of course argued that the Jews falsified their Pentateuch and they argued all along that the family tomb was in fact situated in SHECHEM and that is why Joseph was also buried in Shechem. But why should you rely on the Samaritans and their version of history against the version of the Jews preserved in the Masoretic Text? Because of the evidence already given and if you are Christian you are obligated to believe and accept the New Testament as authentic and inspired. And you should know that whenever the New Testament diverges from the Jewish tradition preserved in the Masoretic Text, it actually agrees with the Samaritan Pentateuch. Please note what *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, art. Samaritan Pentateuch, has to say on the subject:

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“There are important differences between the Hebrew and the Samaritan copies of the Pentateuch in the readings of many sentences. In about two thousand instances in which the Samaritan and the Jewish texts differ, the LXX agrees with the former. *The New Testament also, when quoting from the Old Testament, AGREES AS A RULE WITH THE SAMARITAN TEXT, WHERE THAT DIFFERS FROM THE JEWISH* .”

There are different passages that I could turn to and clearly demonstrate that the New Testament authors reject the Jewish tradition when it conflicts with that of the Samaritan Pentateuch. But in here I will refer only to those which are relevant to our study and which are attributed to a man who was reputed to have been full of the Holy Spirit and a man who performed many great miracles. The man is Stephen who was condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin and was brutally murdered by the Jews for his beliefs and for his critical view of the Jewish religion. Stephen's defence speech before the Jewish Sanhedrin contains several crucial divergences from the traditional Jewish Masoretic Text which actually agree and support the Samaritan version of history. Stephen began his discourse with Abraham. According to Stephen, God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia and not Haran - as the Jewish Masoretic Text says. Please note Acts 7:2-4:

“Stephen answered, Brothers and fathers, listen to me! Before our ancestor Abraham had gone to live in Haran , the God of glory appeared to him in MESOPOTAMIA and said to him, Leave your family and country and go to the land that I will show you.”

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As soon as Stephen began his discourse he deviated from the traditional Masoretic Text of the Jews. According to Stephen, the God of glory appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia while he was still in his father's house. God urged him to leave his father's house and family and go to a land of His bidding. Stephen's version contradicts the Jewish account in Genesis 11:27-32. There we are told that Abraham's father Terah on his own initiative took his whole family and departed from Mesopotamia, that is, Ur in Chaldea, in order to settle in the land of Canaan. He however settled in Haran with his whole family. Then Genesis 12 shows that God appeared to Abraham in HARAN. Genesis 11:26 shows that Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was born. Genesis 11:32 says that Terah died at the age of 205. Genesis 12:4 says that Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran for Canaan. All this data is based on the Jewish Masoretic Text. Since according to the Jewish version Terah was 70 when Abraham was born and since Abraham left Haran when he was 75 years old, it follows then that Terah would have been 145 when Abraham departed from Haran. Since Terah died at the age of 205 according to the Jewish version this then means that Terah continued to live another 60 years after Abraham departed from Haran. Stephen however said that Abraham left Haran AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH. Stephen clearly based himself on the version of the Samaritan Pentateuch where the Genesis account has Terah dying at the age of 145.

Stephen clearly shows that Abraham left his father and the rest of the relatives in Chaldea [Mesopotamia] and with his immediate family left for HARAN:

"Then he [Abraham] came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, WHEN HIS FATHER WAS DEAD, he moved him to this land in which you now dwell" [verse 4].

According to Stephen therefore it is simply not true that Terah migrated with his whole family to Haran. It was Abraham who did so in accordance with God's bid to do so. It is also not true that Terah died at the age of 205 as the Masoretic Text says. Stephen clearly based himself on the version of the Samaritan Pentateuch and not on the Jewish version of history. When Stephen

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spoke of the burning bush and the words which God spoke to Moses, he actually quotes the Samaritan and not the Jewish text. He has God say "I am the God of your fathers" in PLURAL as is the case in the Samaritan version and not singular as the Jewish tradition preserves it in the Masoretic Text. But we are especially interested what did this man who is described as "full of the Holy Spirit" and "whose wise spirit the Jews could not resist" had to say concerning the FAMILY TOMB and what did he have to say concerning the BURIAL OF ISRAEL AND HIS SONS. In Acts 7:15-16 Stephen says:

"Then Jacob went to Egypt, WHERE HE AND HIS SONS DIED. THEIR BODIES WERE TAKEN TO SHECHEM, where they were buried in the grave which Abraham had bought from the clan of Hamor for a sum of money."

The *Living Bible* reads:

"So Jacob came to Egypt, where he died, and all his sons. ALL OF THEM WERE TAKEN TO SHECHEM AND BURIED in the tomb Abraham bought from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father."

The *Aramaic Peshitta*, translated by Dr. George Lamsa reads:

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“So Jacob went down to Egypt where he and our forefathers died. And he was removed to SHECHEM and buried in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor.”

Stephen flatly contradicted the Jewish account and the version of their Pentateuch which has the family tomb in Hebron. Stephen agreed with the Samaritan version and tradition which maintained all along that the family tomb was in SHECHEM and that is where ISRAEL and ALL HIS SONS WERE BURIED. It is only logical that this version is correct, since Moses himself spoke of SHECHEM as the chosen place and not Hebron or Jerusalem. Joseph received the BIRTHRIGHT and he was to be the MOST IMPORTANT AMONG HIS BROTHERS and NOT JUDAH - as the later Jewish redactors claimed. Biblical scholars generally are aware of the fact that Stephen based his speech on the Samaritan version of history and some even have enough courage to plainly admit this fact. Gordon Moyes in his book *Discovering The Young Church* on pp. 53-55 has this pertinent information concerning Stephen and his background:

“South of Galilee, in Samaria, there was also constant dispute with the Jews of Jerusalem and the Hellenistic Jews from Galilee. *They had their own traditions that VARIED from those in Jerusalem* ...There were some Christians among them. These Samaritan Christians played an important, though often unrecognised, part in the history of the first century church. Dr. Abram Spiro has argued cogently that STEPHEN WAS A SAMARITAN CHRISTIAN. He presents fourteen scholarly arguments to support his view. His views are compelling, indicating how Stephen REFLECTS THE SAMARITAN VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY: the inferior place of Moses, the exaltation of Abraham and HIS USE OF THE SAMARITAN VERSION OF THE LAW. The use of the Samaritan text variations WAS FOLLOWED BY STEPHEN IN MORE THAN A SCORE OF INSTANCES, *SOME OF THEM VERY SIGNIFICANT DIVERSIONS* . The Samaritan text features the addition of particles and prepositions designed to make for smoother reading, the inclusion of expansions sometimes several paragraphs in length to help

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elaborate or explain a point AND BABYLONIAN TRADITIONS WHICH SUPPORT SAMARITAN HISTORICAL VIEWPOINTS.

SOME OF THESE ARE MENTIONED BY STEPHEN

. For example, Stephen consistently quotes Abraham as leaving Haran upon his father's death WHICH IS A SAMARITAN VIEWPOINT OF HISTORY which had old Terah living until he was 145 years of age. However, THE JEWS QUOTED FROM THEIR MASORETIC TEXT, USED BY CHRISTIANS, WHICH INDICATES THAT TERAH LIVED FOR 205 YEARS, NOT DYING UNTIL SIXTY YEARS AFTER ABRAHAM LEFT HARAN. Stephen quotes the words of Moses, I am the God of your FATHERS, using the PLURAL of the SAMARITAN TEXT instead of the SINGULAR AS WAS FOUND IN THE MASORETIC TEXT.

The Samaritan claimed MT GERIZIM and the nearby SHECHEM as the TRUE PLACE OF WORSHIP and HERE A RIVAL TEMPLE TO THAT OF JERUSAELM WAS CONSTRUCTED. Stephen TWICE MENTIONS SHECHEM AND THE TOMB THERE OWNED BY ABRAHAM AND THEIR BELIEF THAT ABRAHAM WAS BURIED THERE AND NOT, AS THE JEWS BELIEVED, IN MACHPELAH.

This of course was AN INSULT TO THE JEWS and a key point of dispute. Shechem was the place where God appeared to Abraham, where he built an altar and, IN THEIR VIEW, THE CORRECT PLACE - HOLY PLACE - FOR A SHRINE. Stephen went further in his address indicating that SOLOMON'S TEMPLE WAS NOT ONLY IN THE WRONG PLACE, BUT WAS OF HUMAN ORIGIN. When Stephen quoted the scriptures: What kind of house will you build for me? Where is the place for me to live in? Did not I myself make all these things? HE WAS QUOTING FROM THE SAMARITAN SOURCE WHICH MAKES THREE QUESTIONS AND CHANGES THE CONTEXT OF THE JEWISH TEXT. Even the quoting of these changed verses would have brought the ire of the Jews upon him. A further insight into Stephen's SAMARITAN BACKGROUND is the way he quotes God dealing personally with Abraham, whereas he claims God dealt with Moses ONLY THROUGH AN ANGEL in the giving of the Law. This shows the superiority of Abraham over Moses, BUT IT IS IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE JEWISH TRADITION.

THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE, THEREFORE, FOR STEPHEN'S SAMARITAN ORIGIN."

Only when you realise all these facts can you really understand why the Jewish Religious Court could not even listen to the INSULTING WORDS OF STEPHEN. Only then do you realise why in such a hurry they dragged him outside of the city and then STONED HIM TO DEATH. Acts 6:8-10 says that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and that he performed great wonders and miracles. It also says that the Jews vigorously argued with him but that they could not withstand the wisdom of Stephen which came from the Holy Spirit nor could they refute his views. Since Stephen was FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT and since the Jews could not PROVE HIS VIEWS WRONG then we can be sure that his view of history was CORRECT and that of the Jews

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WRONG.